

Acute Hepatitis B

Case Definition

Clinical criteria

An acute illness with:

- Discrete onset of symptoms (e.g. fatigue, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, intermittent nausea, vomiting), and
- Jaundice or elevated serum aminotransferase levels

Laboratory criteria

- IgM antibody to hepatitis B core antigen (anti-HBc) positive or hepatitis B surface antigen-positive (HBsAg-positive)
- IgM anti-HAV negative (if done)

Case classification

- A confirmed case is one that meets the clinical criteria and has laboratory confirmation.

To date, asymptomatic individuals who are IgM anti-HBc positive have not been included as reportable cases. However, it is expected that as rates of acute disease continue to decline, the case definition will be expanded to include newly infected individuals identified on the basis of laboratory results alone. In expanding surveillance to include asymptomatic HBV infections, these cases will need to be distinguished from symptomatic cases to ensure accurate interpretation of surveillance data.